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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 000120

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/IP/NEA
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS USAID/DCHA/OFDA
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS PEACE CORPS HQ
USAID FOR ANE/AA GORDON WEST AND JIM BEVER
MANILA FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY
TREASURY FOR GENERAL COUNSEL/DAUFHAUSER AND DAS JZARATE
TREASURY ALSO FOR OFAC/RNEWCOMB AND TASK FORCE ON TERRORIST
FINANCING
JUSTICE FOR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL/DLAUFMAN
NSC FOR MILLARD
SECDEF FOR OSD/ISA LILLENFELD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NEPAL'S MAOIST INSURGENCY, JANUARY 10-16,
2004

SUMMARY

1. Almost 100 insurgents have surrendered since the announcement of the Government of Nepal's (GON) amnesty program. On January 9, Maoists released an economic report touting tourists as their main source of revenue. On January 15, Maoists gunned down a newly appointed mayor. According to press accounts, nine security personnel were killed and thirteen injured in separate clashes. Security forces reportedly killed twenty-nine Maoists. On January 15, RNA spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung said 1200 Maoists have been confirmed dead and 200 more suspected killed in clashes since the breakdown of the cease-fire on August 27, 2003. Over 5,000 people benefited from mobile camps held in several districts. Crossfire reportedly killed two civilians, including a child, and Maoists reportedly murdered four others. Insurgents abducted four civilians, including a student, who remain missing. Maoists in the far west reportedly are forcing children, women and elderly people to serve as sentinels. According to press reports, the Indian Special Service Bureau (SSB) arrested three Indian nationals on January 9 on charges of supplying weapons to Maoists. On January 16, members from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) were granted access by security forces to patients being treated at the army hospital in Kathmandu. End Summary.

ALMOST 100 MAOISTS SURRENDER

2. According to newspaper reports, fifty-seven Maoist cadres surrendered in various districts this week, including four brigade commanders. During a press conference on January 15, Royal Nepal Army (RNA) spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung reported that ninety-four insurgents had surrendered since the announcement of the Government of Nepal's (GON) amnesty program. Post on January 15, also contacted a Home Ministry Joint Secretary who confirmed that almost 100 Maoists have surrendered. The Joint Secretary commented that the numbers were not as important as the fact that high-level Maoists, such as company and brigade commanders, were surrendering as well as the lower-ranking cadres.

3. RNA units in the northeastern district of Sindhupalchowk reportedly have started a campaign to persuade Maoists to surrender. The RNA personnel are distributing letters to the insurgents, urging them to give up violence. According to local press reports, the RNA and the locals also meet weekly to discuss security concerns as well as address any other problems. In addition to the meetings, security personnel and the locals have drafted their own code of conduct.

4. In addition to dealing with the loss of those cadres who have surrendered, the Maoist organization allegedly is facing internal strife. Four rebels were killed following an argument over an investigation into a fire, and another cadre was killed after the bomb he was carrying exploded. Several other insurgents suffered injuries.

MAOISTS RELEASE ECONOMIC REPORT;
TOURISTS MAIN SOURCE OF REVENUE

5. On January 9, the Maoists' so-called development committee in Taplejung District, which borders India in the east, released an economic report touting tourists as their main source of revenue. According to the report, extortion from tourists and people associated with the tourism industry are the insurgents' main source of income. Other sources include taxes and fines imposed by the rebels on

teachers, government workers and farmers. Maoists also collect a percentage of crops from the farmers.

MAOISTS GUN DOWN MAYOR

16. The Mayor of Birgunj, in Bara District, reportedly was gunned down by Maoists on the morning of January 15. Gopal Giri, who was only recently appointed to the position, had gone to meet the Maoists at their request. According to press accounts, the rebels had demanded almost USD 7000 from the Mayor in December, and later demanded Giri's resignation after he refused to meet the insurgents' extortion demand. The Mayor's brother was also wounded in the shooting. It is not clear whether the killing was retribution for resisting the extortion demand or part of a broader campaign of assassinating city officials.

CLASHES CLAIM LIVES

17. According to press accounts, nine security personnel were killed and thirteen injured in separate clashes. A Royal Nepal Army (RNA) soldier and two civilians were killed on January 16, after a bomb exploded inside a passenger bus in Dhankuta District. The soldier was conducting a security search on the bus. It is not clear what caused the bomb to detonate. On January 15, a soldier and a policeman were killed in separate ambushes. The soldier was killed after Maoists ambushed a joint patrol team of army and police in Kathmandu District. Three other security men were injured in the attack. A group of Maoists in Dhankuta District opened fire on police at a government office, killing one and injuring another. On January 14, an Armed Police Force (APF) officer was killed and three others wounded in the western district of Surkhet after their patrol was ambushed by Maoists. On that same day in the east, in Dhading District, four security personnel were injured after hitting a Maoist-laid landmine. Another policeman was killed on January 13 in Dhanusha District, following a confrontation with Maoists on a passenger bus. On January 11 a soldier was killed in the eastern district of Udayapur. Three traffic police were shot and killed by Maoists in the early morning of January 10 in Dhading District.

18. On January 14, two insurgents were killed in the western district of Dailekh and another thirteen in different clashes on January 13; seven from the eastern districts of Jhapa, Kavre, Parsa, and Khotang; three from the western districts of Dang, Salyan, and Surkhet; and three from the central districts of Gulmi and Gorkha. On January 11, eight insurgents were killed in the eastern districts of Jhapa, Taplejung and Bara, and two more in Gorkha. Four rebels, including a female, were killed in clashes on January 10 in Rautahat, Khotang, Dhanusha and Morang Districts.

19. On January 13, the local press reported that the Government of Nepal (GON) is considering equipping traffic police with guns due to the increasing attacks by Maoists against unarmed policemen. According to the Valley Traffic Police Office (VTPO) Chief Surrendra Bahadur Pal, the VTPO has long demanded weapons for all its personnel, and the increased violence has made it "a necessity." Seven traffic policemen have been shot and killed by Maoists in the past year.

RNA CLAIMS 1400 MAOISTS KILLED

10. At a January 15 press conference, RNA spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung said security forces were experiencing "remarkable success" against the Maoists. Gurung said 1200 Maoists have been confirmed dead and 200 more suspected killed in clashes since the breakdown of the cease-fire on August 27, 2003. Three hundred and eighteen security personnel also lost their lives due to the insurgency. When questioned about security personnel defecting to join the Maoists, Gurung answered that he could not confirm such cases, but added "one is free after he quits the RNA." Gurung also opined that Maoists could be involved in the recent, often violent, student protests.

MAOIST ROBBERIES SCORE USD 15,000

11. Maoists netted USD 15,000 from two bold robberies on January 12. Armed rebels robbed a bank in Kaski District, and a customer counter of the Nepal Electricity Authority in Itahari District. Police recovered a van used in the bank robbery, but all the suspects remain at large.

THOUSANDS BENEFIT FROM MOBILE CAMPS

12. Over 5,000 people benefited from mobile camps held in the central districts of Lalitpur and Lamjung, the western

districts of Jajarkot, Baglung, and Dadeldhura, and the eastern districts of Taplejung and Sunsari. Security forces reportedly helped saved the life of a pregnant woman suffering serious complications at the health camp in Baglung. The mobile camps provide government services such as physical examinations and administrative assistance, and also distribute medicine and agricultural and school supplies.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS UNABATED

13. A man and a child reportedly were killed in crossfire in separate incidents on January 15. An eight-year-old child was hit by a stray bullet when security forces and Maoists clashed in Bajura District. It is unclear which side killed the child. An eighty-two-year-old man was killed in Chitwan by security forces who opened fire on Maoists from a helicopter. Maoists reportedly killed four civilians in separate incidents. On January 15 the insurgents murdered a seventy-three-year-old man in Parbat District, and a healthcare worker in Solukhumbu who had been abducted by the rebels on January 2. On January 13, in the far-western district of Kalikot, insurgents brutally murdered a man after stealing USD 120 from him. Another civilian was killed by the rebels in Mahottari District on January 10. He was affiliated with the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP).

14. A fifteen-year-old student reportedly was abducted from his home by Maoists on January 9 in the eastern district of Therathum. On January 11, three businessmen also were abducted by rebels in the far-eastern district of Jhapa. They remain missing.

MAOISTS USE CHILDREN AS SENTINELS

15. Maoists in the far western district of Kalikot reportedly are forcing children, women and elderly people to serve as sentinels. The rebels demand that one member from each family serve as guards, and are under strict orders to notify the Maoists of any approaching security personnel. According to the villagers, children as young as eight years old and people as old as seventy have been forced to stand guard.

INDIAN ARMS DEALERS ARRESTED

16. According to press reports, on January 9, the Indian Special Service Bureau (SSB) deployed on the Indo-Nepal border arrested three Indian nationals on charges of supplying weapons to Maoists in Nepal's district of Sarlahi, which borders India in the south. Nepal police reportedly supplied the SSB with information that led to the arrests.

NHRC GRANTED ACCESS TO ARMY HOSPITAL

17. On January 16, members from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) were granted access by security forces to patients being treated at the army hospital in Kathmandu. NHRC representatives were at the hospital to survey the condition and treatment of security personnel, civilians and Maoists wounded in the insurgency. The NHRC repeatedly has voiced concern over alleged human rights abuses by security personnel.

MALINOWSKI